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August 16, 1955
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SUBJECT: Bi-weekly Review - July 31 through August 14

POLITICAL

Meeting of Regional Legislatures (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Western and Northern Houses of Assembly have completed their August sessions. The Western House sat for only a few hours to conclude its only matter of business, the White Paper implementing the Gorsuch salary revisions, before adjourning sine die (see Labor, below).

The Northern House, however, sat for four days and passed several important bills in addition to the Gorsuch Report. The most important measure debated was the 1955 Development Corporation Law, which will have exclusive jurisdiction over development loans and will be financed by some assets of the Northern Marketing Boards as well as existing development credits of the two present Development Boards which it will replace. Although voted down at an early session, the bill was finally approved by the House. The Sardauna, who will be the Chairman of the new Corporation, assured the House that the Corporation would pursue a less restrictive loan policy than its predecessors, and that it would be "above the competing interests of the various Ministries", and "above party politics and political interests".

Several members' motions, most of which were offered by Mallam Ibrahim IMAM, elected member from Bornu and former NPC executive member, reflected pressure for self-government and anti-Southern sentiments. Considerable debate was engendered by a motion seeking to restrict loans by the new Development Corporation to persons "of Northern stock born in the Northern Region". Another motion, to which the Government agreed in principle, urged the establishment of a Hausa Language Board which would standardize the written language. The mover said that he hoped that Hausa would become the region's official language at the time of self-government.

On several occasions speakers from the Government bench voiced assurances that the Government did not desire and was not empowered to pass on subjects which lay in the jurisdiction of the Native Authorities (NA). The first such occasion occurred when Opposition

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Leader Imam moved that Government establish a committee to determine which categories of NA officials might engage in political activity. The Premier answered that the question should be decided by the individual NA's but that the Government felt that official members of NA councils and heads of NA departments should not be permitted to take part in elections to local government bodies. Again, when a member asked whether NA salaries would be increased concomitantly with the Gorsuch raises for employees of the Regional Government, the Sardauna stated that Government would prepare a revised set of salary scales for NA staff but that their adoption would be a matter for NA action and would be dependent upon the financial resources of the individual NA's.

Zik to Visit the United Kingdom (UNCLASSIFIED)

Eastern Premier Nnamdi AZIKIWE will sail from Lagos on August 30 for a six weeks' visit to the United Kingdom to contact various commercial firms which have indicated interest in investing in the Eastern Region. Prior to his departure from Nigeria, Zik will spend some time in Lagos during the meeting of the Federal House of Representatives.

Regional Elections in North and West (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Unlike the East, where the present House dates from 1953, members of both the Northern and Western Houses of Assembly were elected in the fall of 1951 and first met in February 1952. Since Chapter III, Sec. 82(2)(b), of the 1954 Constitution requires that a Regional Governor dissolve his legislature after five years, new Houses in the West and North must be elected by early 1957. From both a financial and a political standpoint there is considerable uncertainty as to whether the elections will be scheduled before or after the constitutional conference set for next August.

Although no direct public statement has been issued concerning the matter, the Northern Governor, acting on the advice of his Executive Council, will probably not dissolve the Northern House until the expiration of the full five year term. Because of the size of the Region, elections in the North are extremely expensive and there is as yet little effective agitation for dissolving the present House prior to its statutory limit.

The West, however, is another matter. Western Premier AWOLOWO has declared in the last meeting of the Western House that his Government will not resign before the constitutional talks and that it has a "mandate" to remain in office until February 1957. Whether the Governor Sir John RANKINE, will follow his Premier is open to question. Certainly an election in June 1956 would simplify the question of who will speak for the West at the Constitutional Conference.

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Benson Wins Lagos Bye-election (UNCLASSIFIED)

T. O.S. Benson, NCNC Chief Whip in the Federal House, won the right to re-occupy his seat which had been declared vacant (see D-177, June 1, 1955). He defeated his Action Group opponent by a 15% margin in a Lagos bye-election on August 11.

Voters turned out in far smaller numbers than at the federal elections of last fall. Under 35% of the 80,000 registered voters in the four wards concerned cast their ballots.

First Congress of the Dynamic Party (UNCLASSIFIED)

On the occasion of its first Congress, the Dynamic Party has circulated an address of its founder and Secretary General, Dr. Chike OBI. The report states that since the party's formation in April, 1951, it has grown to include 2,000 registered members, 50,000 card-carrying members and over 300,000 sympathizers. The paper states that the party's political philosophy of "Dynamic collectivism" accepts the fact that Nigeria is at present incapable of democracy in the Western sense, and that Nigeria must undergo a period of benevolent dictatorship before it is ready to emerge as an independent state in the Western community of nations.

Dr. Obi urges that the present regions be dissolved in favor of a strong central government and that the "total conscription of all psychological and material resources of Nigeria" be mobilized for the introduction of Western technology and administrative methods. Dr. Obi claimed that the Dynamic Party is the third largest Nigerian party and is "definitely the first in organization". He admitted, however, that the party's financial status was far from secure and requested that members contribute to defray the expenses involved in planned extensive propaganda and education campaign, seeking to mobilize public opinion against the idea of self-government in 1956.

Comment (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

It is possible, though unlikely, that the Dynamic Party has 2,000 members. The party has lost its chief supporters in the Benin-Delta area, the Oba of Benin, since he launched the Benin-Delta Peoples Party.

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ECONOMIC

Price Implications of Gorsuch Wage Increases (UNCLASSIFIED)

In passing the Gorsuch civil service salary increases, the Eastern Region transferred all regional daily and weekly-paid workers to established permanent staff and set their minimum wage at £66 per annum (approximately £1-6-0 per week, or roughly 5/- per day). By so doing, the East equalled the minimum daily-paid wage rate established by the Western Region last October.

Since the new scale represents a 60% - 100% increase for Eastern daily-paid workers, it carries a serious inflationary threat. Daily-paid laborers in the North, however, are still at wage levels of 1/10d - 3 shillings, while the maximum paid by the Federal Government is four shillings. It is probable that neither the Federal Government nor the Northern Government will be able to maintain their present rates in the face of the East's action.

Certain Local Government Authorities have set up committees to try to control the price of basic foodstuffs, some of them going so far as to stockpile commodities against the time when the retroactive portions of the new wage grants are paid. General wage increases have been announced by several of the largest private employers, including the United Africa Company. As yet sufficient data has not been released to determine the amount of such increases.

Recruitment of Expatriate Communications Technicians (UNCLASSIFIED)

On his return from a 6-week recruitment tour in the United Kingdom, Federal Minister of Communications and Aviation K.O. MBADIWE presented an oprimistic statement concerning the possibility of recruiting sorely-needed British technicians for Nigeria's postal and telecommunications staff.

He reported that 160 applications had been received for the Post and Telegraph Department's 60 vacant positions which had been advertised in the United Kingdom. He also announced that two electrical enginners have been loaned by the British General Electric Company to supervise the replanning and replacement of the present Lagos telephone system, and to supervise the laying of new telephone cables in the capital area.

The Minister stated that his brief tour had convinced him of "the inadequacy of our communications system, and of the vital need for imaginative planning. The reorganisation plan which has been adopted is a move in the right direction. A drastic situation requires a drastic cure..."

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COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Nigeria's existing communications apparatus is a perenial victim of public complaint. Long distance telephone service is generally unavailable; radio telephone equipment constructed in the last two years now links Lagos with the regional capitols but is far from adequate for commercial and government requirements. Lagos and Port Harcourt have the only automatic dial telephone service in Nigeria although the demands of such urban areas as Ibadan and Enugu have far out-taxed their present facilities. Telegrams may take as long as one week to deliver to rural addresses since the telegraph network is generally based upon the railway routes.

Southern Cameroons Invites Foreign Investments (UNCLASSIFIED)

During its sitting at the beginning of the month, the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly approved a government motion indorsing direct foreign investments in the region. The statement promised that the Cameroons would do everything in its power to attract foreign enterprises "in all spheres of economic activities". Indicating that local financial participation was preferred, the statement stressed that such local partnership would not be a rigid requirement.

The Cameroons Government stated that it proposed "to advise the Governor-General to make land available on reasonable terms for all suitable types of enterprise, including overseas plantation enterprise, having due regard to the interests of indigenous inhabitants, Apart from the lease of land, the government will grant such other facilities as are within its power to assist foreign enterprise that comes to establish in the territory".

Eastern Cement Plant (UNCLASSIFIED)

E. O. EYO, Deputy Speaker in the Eastern House of Assembly, has announced that the new cement plant at Nkalagu is expected to begin operations by May 1957. He stated that the new factory will have a yearly capacity of 100,000 tons and that £2 million have been subscribed for the project.

May Trade Figures (UNCLASSIFED)

A further indication that the terms of trade are turning slightly against Nigeria was furnished by the relase of foreign trade statistics for May 1955. These show imports of £10.3 million against exports of £11.6 million. In the same month of 1954 the respective figures were £8.8 million and £12.1 million.

Nigeria continues to show a favorable balance with the United States, importing approximately £621,000 and exporting £978,000 during the month of May.

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LABOR

Gorsuch Report (UNCLASSIFIED)

In their August sessions, both the Western and Northern Houses of Assembly approved the wage increases for civil servants as recommended by the Gorsuch Report. The Eastern House had approved most of the recommended increases last month (see D-18, July 30, 1955, p.6).

The Western House accepted the Regional Government's White Paper with a minimum of debate. The Paper made little or no changes in the majority of the new salary schedules but did not fully commit the Government to accepting educational and traveling allowances for the children of expatriate officers, which section was to be "subject to further study by Government".

Wages at the new salary levels are retroactive to October 1, 1954 and are estimated to cost £800,000 for the current fiscal year and £300,000 for future years.

The Northern House likewise approved the Gorsuch salary recommendations, and specifically included the payment of the controversial educational allowances for expatriate officers. In presenting the Government motion to approve the Northern White Paper implementing the Gorsuch recommendations, the North's Premier expressed the view that the Paper provided a "sure basis" for the establishment of a Regional Public Service which could effect the establishment of facilities necessary for rapid Northernization of the service. The Sardauna stated that he hoped that the additional compensation provided for expatriate officers would be sufficient to retain those already in service and to recruit the necessary young officers. He concluded the Government's presentation by stating: "We will not cease in our endeavours to train Northerners to fill these posts, but we must not fail to offer welcome and inducement to expatriates to carry on their good work until our young men are ready to take over". The cost of the Gorsuch recommendations for the north are approximately the same as in the Western region, i.e., £800,000 for fiscal year 1955 and £300,000 for future fiscal years.

The Federal House of Representatives will vote on the Gorsuch recommendations at its session beginning August 17. For employees of the Federal services in Lagos, the Southern Cameroons, and in Federal services (such as Police and Communications throughout the regions), it is anticipated that the Federal House will make little alteration in the recommended changes, but may take separate action concerning daily-paid wages, which are not included in the Gorsuch recommendations.

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Federal Labor Advisory Council (UNCLASSIFIED)

Federal Minister of Labour and Welfare Chief Festus S. OKOTIE-EBOH opened the first meeting of the Federal Labor Advisory Council which was held in Lagos on August 5, 1955 (see D-162, April 15, 1955). Before the council considered the first substantive matter on its agenda, Okotie-Eboh thanked the council members for agreeing to serve on the body without pay, and said that government labor legislation would be far more effective and reflective of sectional and special interests if all such opinions could be studied by the government before legislative action was taken affecting their interests.

The council's first report will consist of recommendations for the revision of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance to bring it into harmony with present conditions and needs.

All Nigeria Trade Union Federation Official Joins Ports Authority (UNCLASSIFIED)

F. O. PORBENI, General Secretary of Public Workers Utility and Technical and General Workers Union of Nigeria and the Cameroons, and member of the Executive Council of ANTUF, has accepted an appointment as Personnel Officer for the Nigerian Ports Authority, where he will be specifically charged with personnel matters on the Apapa Docks in the port of Lagos.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

While Porbeni's new job will not completely sever his trade union activities, he will probably resign his union position and, consequently, his post in ANTUF.

There have recently been several labor disturbances among Lagos dock workers, most of which derived from grievances against European personnel officers accused of discrimination against African staff members and the obstruction of Nigerianization of the Ports Authority.

Strike at Cameroons Development Corporation (UNCLASSIFIED)

A government press release has reported that approximately 8,000 daily and monthly-paid workers on the plantations belonging to the Cameroons Development Corporation (CDC) have struck for 10%-14% wage increases on the instructions of their union.

F. C. NWOKEDI, Assistant Deputy Labor Commissioner in the Eastern region, has gone to the Cameroons in an effort to expedite the settlement between the union and the CDC management officials. The government reports that the strikers have not engaged in rioting or other forms of violence.

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EDUCATION

Eastern University of Nigeria (UNCLASSIFIED)

After the Eastern House of Assembly had approved the Regional Government's Bill to establish an Eastern University (see D-177, June 1, 1955, p.5), E. E. ESUA, Secretary of the Nigerian Union of Teachers and Chairman of the Committee for African Students In North America, gave an address over the Nigerian Broadcasting Service in which he attacked the planned institution and urged that the idea be "shelved" until such future time when another Nigerian University is required.

Esua noted that the existing level of Nigerian secondary education was unable to provide sufficient qualified applicants for the University College at Ibadan. He felt that the East should give priority to the improvement and extension of the existing secondary education facilities rather than provide an inferior university education to those not properly qualified. He felt that the East could not provide adequate funds for the establishment of the Regional University and noted that the Federal Government has encountered difficulty in raising the required capital for the Ibadan school. He criticized the plan for failing to provide for membership in the British Inter-University Council and because it did not envisage obtaining the approval of London University for its degrees.

Mr. Esua was answered a few days later by the Eastern Regional Minister of Education, Mr. I. U. AKPABIO, who claimed that there are sufficient qualified secondary school graduates now available to justify another Nigerian University and that their number would increase materially in the next few years. He stated that despite the objection of Mr. Esua or any other critic, the East was convinced that a University was necessary and planned to go ahead with its establishment.

Lagos School Collapses (UNCLASSIFIED)

Eight children were killed and some 30 others injured when the roof of a Lagos primary school collapsed. Bitter protests from Lagos newspapers have brought about the closing of two other schools in the city and have elicited promises from the Lagos Town Council that additional building inspectors will be assigned to insure that all school buildings are structurally safe.

Nigeria Qualified to Award Preliminary Engineering Degree (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology, with headquarters at Zaria in the Northern Region and branches at Ibadan and Enugu (under construction), has announced that its courses in civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering have been recognized by the respective British professional institutes. Although the college's

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courses have not yet been accredited for a full degree, students entering its engineering classes at the present time are assured the opportunity to sit for the preliminary engineering examination in from two and one-half to four years, depending upon their academic qualifications at the time of entrance.

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul General

DEPARTMENT PASS: Accra, London, Leopoldville, and Dakar.